



**Louis H. Bruni  
County Judge**

1000 Houston St. 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Laredo, Texas 78040

(956) 523-4600  
(956) 523-5065

---

## **WEBB COUNTY PRESS RELEASE**

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:  
Raul Casso**

**April 30, 2004**

**(956) 523-4600**

### **WEBB COUNTY DELIVERS PRESIDENTIAL PERMIT APPLICATION TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – After receiving the Texas Transportation Commission's approval of its international bridge application on Thursday, Webb County today delivered its Presidential Permit application to the U.S. Department of State for consideration.

"We are pleased to present our application for a Presidential Permit to build 'Puente de la Unidad,'" said Webb County Judge Louis H. Bruni. "This is a bridge that will bring a lot of benefits to the citizens of Webb County and Laredo, as well as our friends across the border."

"As representatives of the taxpayers, we believe officials in Washington will take notice of several favorable aspects of Webb County's bridge proposal," said Bruni. He explained that the bridge would be at this region's narrowest point in the Rio Grande and would have the shortest, most direct connectivity to planned and existing roads on both sides of the border, thus costing significantly less than the city's proposal.

"In addition," he noted, "our bridge would be build at the precise location spelled out in this community's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Cartas Urbanas agreed upon by

Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, and the master transportation plan approved by Governor Tomas Yarrington and the State of Tamaulipas.”

“Webb County has waited a long time for the day when we could finally share this professional, comprehensive application with federal officials for their review and input,” said Webb County Commissioner Judith Gutierrez. “And now, that day is here.”

Gutierrez explained that although a new Texas law would have allowed Webb County to submit its application to the federal level at the same time it submitted the application to the Texas Department of Transportation, Webb County refrained because Texas law also requires that an international bridge application be approved by the Texas Transportation Commission before can proceed at the federal level. If an application is submitted simultaneously at the state and federal levels, it becomes invalid at the federal level if it is denied by the Transportation Commission.

Even as the county’s application moves to the next level, Bruni said that Webb County continues to hold out hope that the City of Laredo will work in conjunction with the county.

“Though we are prepared to go it alone if we must, Webb County places a great value on the need for a partnership on this project,” said Bruni. “We jointly represent nearly all of the same people and should work together jointly to improve the lives of those people.”

Gutierrez agreed. “The Texas Transportation Commission was persuaded that there are no legal barriers to our two local governments working together on this project, in spite of the city’s claims to the contrary,” she said.

“To say that the city and county cannot join together on the next international bridge is not only flawed, but it is also foolish,” said Gutierrez. “Let’s get together and build the ‘Puente de la Unidad’ now before any more time is wasted.”

“As we have on a number of occasions, Webb County invites the city leaders to come back to the negotiating table and help build an authentic, genuine bridge partnership that will best serve our community,” said Gutierrez.